

Educational Values of *Kusakɔkɔ* Initiation Rites of Avatime in the Volta Region of Ghana

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Abstract: The woman is a significant figure in the development of Avatime community. People of Avatime recognize and value the role of women in society and therefore mark the transition of a female from girlhood to womanhood. The problem is that educational values are rooted in the celebration of this transition called *kusakɔkɔ* initiation rites, yet they have not been described, discussed or documented, therefore they could be lost. Moreover, considerable amounts of vital educational information embodied in *kusakɔkɔ* initiation rites are not being taught in the schools of Avatime. Sadly, the rich cultural heritage of educational values which should be preserved have not been documented to put the area in the spotlight of the world. It was imperative to identify, describe and discuss effectively the educational values of *kusakɔkɔ* initiation rites of Avatime as a resource material for art education. The study will give exposure of a very important cultural activity and the dynamism of indigenous cultural practices that are hidden in this special initiation rites. This research adopted a qualitative approach, specifically ethnography, to collect data through observation and interviews. The main findings are that, the Avatimes mark the passage of their girls into womanhood by performing series of rituals known as *kusakɔkɔ* as educational values are evident in the rituals. The educational values include Morals (*eboegbã*), Gratitude (*dasedodo*), Respect (*kunɔbuo*), Religious Values (*Kusɔli*) Motherhood (*obinee*), Protection, Manners (*Ligbazeze gba*), Beauty (*kupedi*), Cleanliness, (*kudradra*), Punctuality or Time values (*ɔnyɔavakugaga*), Diligence, (*Kubue*), Endurance, Treasures (*eyola*)

Recommendations were that there should be collaboration between the pastors and the custodians of Avatime traditional area to erase the notion that there are sacrilegious beliefs and superstitions embedded in *kusakɔkɔ* rites. Control measures should be instituted to curb promiscuity in the area. Finally, it is highly recommended that this document should be incorporated in the Educational Curriculum to put the values of *kusakɔkɔ* in the spotlight of the world.

Keywords: Educational values, womanhood, transition, cultural heritage, initiation rites.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Avatimes are one of the Guan traditional ethnic groups found in the western part of the Volta Region near Ho. They are believed to have migrated from Axim area in the Western Region of Ghana. They settled on the mountain called Gemi, which is the second highest mountain in Ghana. Avatime, also known as *Afatime*, *Sideme*, or *Sia*, is a Kwa language of the the people of Avatime. The Avatimes live primarily in seven towns and villages of Amedzofe, Vane, Gbadzeme, Dzokpe, Biakpe, Dzogbefeme, and Fume. The language in Avatime is called *Sia* or (*Siyase*) and is spoken by about 24,000 native speakers as at the year 2003. The language family of the Avatime people include Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Kwa -Logba, Ka-Togo and Avatime-Nyangbo. It can be referred to as *Ke-dane-ma Si-ya* people language. Avatime is a tonal language with three tones, vowel harmony, and has been claimed to have double articulated fricatives. (Maddieson, 1995)

2. EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Education, according to Quist and Strik (2002) is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge. Education, as proper usage of knowledge, is acquired and deals with passing down worthwhile or useful values within a society. Society such as Avatime traditional area values knowledge, skills, norms and laws and customs which include the use of both visual and performing arts, beliefs, philosophies and many others. These values are also involved in the celebration of *kusakɔkɔ* initiation rites of the people of Avatime.

The concept of education can be interpreted differently by scholars and non scholars alike based on their interest and orientation. Looking at education from the socialist perspective, Durkheim (1992) thinks that it is the systematic socialization of the younger generation by which the latter learns religious and moral beliefs, feelings of nationality and collective opinions of all kinds.

Kneller (1971) also adds that education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage through schools, colleges, universities and other institution. The socialist see education, as the transmission of culture, and this view cannot be seen to be narrow because both in the school and outside the school, societies transmit their cultural heritage. Avatimes hand down all their accumulated knowledge, skills, norms, beliefs and values to their members through *kusakoko* celebration. Agyeman (1986) asserts that education is basically the process through which the individual learns to become a complete social member of his society and thereby performs social roles in the society. He went on to say, education is a social institution through which each society influences its accumulated knowledge, art, laws, morals and ways of behavior, the acquisition of which brings the individuals to the perfection of their nature. The concept of education cannot be interpreted without looking at the philosophical view point of Peters (1966) who maintains that education implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable means. According to Hist and Peters (1970) educating people suggests a family of processes whose principle of unity is the development of desirable qualities in them. Some other philosophers share their views about education. Whitehead cited in Hist and Peters (1970) opines that, education is the art of the utilization of knowledge. He sees education as guidance towards the understanding of the art of living. This means that if you have knowledge and you do not apply, it is useless to enhance living condition.

Dewey (2009) defines education as the reconstruction or re-organization of experiences which adds to the meaning of experience and increases the ability to direct the cause of subsequent experience. He also points out further that education is fundamental method of social process and reforms. To him education is the best teacher. O'connor (1957) also adds that, the educational system of any society is more or less elaborate mechanism designed by society to instill in individuals certain skills or attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in that society. He maintains that the business of education is therefore to develop the individual as a person and prepare him to function effectively in the society.

Moumouni, (1964) explains that, traditional education was a comprehensive approach to the development of the whole man for the service of his community. He says traditional education was an integrated experience combining not only physical with character training but also manual with intellectual training. Here emphasis was placed on excellence in character development since the lack of it makes a person totally useless. So, if education is the process by which people acquire knowledge, skills, habits, values or attitudes, then, it should help people become useful members of society to develop appreciation of their cultural heritage and live more satisfying lives. The most common way to get an education is to attend school but, much education also takes place outside the classroom which involves both learning and teaching. Sometimes people learn by teaching themselves. They also learn with the help of other people such as parents or teachers. Parents are a child's first and perhaps the most important teachers because they learn attitudes, habits and values that help shape their character and remain with them throughout life.

Kusakoko celebration sees education as key to helping the people of Avatime to acquire the skills they need for their everyday activities and gives them specialized training they may need to prepare for a job or career such as weaving of cloth, weaving of basket, making pottery, beads making, carpentry, carving and making farming implements as well as farming itself. It is believed that, of all living things, only man has developed a means of passing on his learning values, skills and attitudes to new generations. Learning takes place through the entire life span of man. The education content in *kusakoko* includes family loyalty, loyalty, virtue, propriety and patience, morals, gratitude, respect, religious values, motherhood, protection, manners, beauty, cleanliness, punctuality and time values, diligence, endurance and treasures as expressed in their own language (see section 4.3). Many people think only of school work when they speak of education. More true, education, however, comes from outside the school programme than from within it. It is in ordinary family situations that the child learns his basic skills, attitudes, sharing with others, love of fellow man, and respect for law which means, it is upon these fundamentals that, future success and satisfaction often depend. Upon such things rest the rich heritage of human due to the fact that, education helps in bringing up or training, a member through instructions to strengthening of the powers of body or mind.

Here, the emphasis are placed on the training of the mind and the body because even in simple Paleolithic and Neolithic societies of hunters, food gathers and hoe cultivators, long before the invention, have been taken to teach the young, skills and knowledge necessary for the community to survive. From all the definitions of the various sociologists, philosophers, traditionalists and others, it is obvious that educational values have been derived from passing on of milieu of accumulated knowledge, skills, values, standards, morals, attitudes, and the like through societal beliefs, symbols, and experiences for the development of the whole person. There is the consideration of the cognitive, affective as well as the psychomotor development of the individual but, to the traditionalists and sociologists, education has taken a social dimension. It is seen as the transmission of culture of society to the child socialization or the development of knowledge, skills, ability or character and spirit by teaching, study or experience for which the individual becomes successful and learns to become a complete member of his society. As to how *kusakoko* educates, (see sections 4.2 and 4.3) respectively. So one may ask, what is culture?

3. THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON EDUCATION

Helman (2001) defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Keesing as cited in Helman, says culture comprises systems of shared ideas, systems of concepts and rules and meaning that underlie and are expressed in the way that human beings live. Then, Helman explains that culture is a series of guidelines, both explicit and implicit, that individuals inherit as members of a particular society, and that tells them, how to view the world, how to experience it emotionally, and how to behave in it in relation to other people, to supernatural forces or gods, and to the natural environment. To him, it also provides them with a way of transmitting these guidelines to the next generation by the use of symbols, language, art and ritual. He says to some extent, culture can be seen as an inherited 'lens' through which the individual perceives and understand the world that he inhabits and learns how to live within it. Moving on he says, growing up within any society is a form of enculturation, whereby the individual slowly acquires the cultural 'lens' of that society and concludes that, without such a shared perception of the world, both the cohesion and continuity of any human group would be impossible. Helman also mentioned the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall who has proposed that in each human group there are actually three different levels of culture. These range from the explicit manifest culture, 'tertiary level culture', visible to the outsider, such as social rituals, traditional dress, national cuisine and festive occasions, in deeper levels known only to members of the cultural group themselves. He explains that, while the tertiary level is basically the public frontage presented to the world at large, below it lies a series of implicit assumptions, beliefs and rules which constitute that group's 'grammar'.

Helman further says, deeper level includes 'secondary level culture' where these underlying rules and assumptions are known to the members of the group but rarely shared with outsiders, and 'primary level culture'. This is the deepest level of culture in which the rules are known to all, obeyed by all, but seldom if ever stated. Its rules are implicit, taken for granted, almost impossible for the average person to state as a system, and generally out of awareness.

However, in Hall's view, while the manifest tertiary level of culture is easiest to observe, change, and manipulate, it is the deeper levels thus, primary and secondary, which are the most hidden, stable and resistant to change. This in turn has major implications for the applied social scientist, especially for those involved in aiding or educating populations from cultures different to their own. Helman (2001) gave an example that all cultures divide up their members into different social categories such as men or women, children or adults, young people or old people, kinsfolk or strangers' upper class or lower class, able or disabled, normal or abnormal, mad or bad, healthy or ill. This statement agrees with the reason why the people of Avatime decided to separate only women to hand down their knowledge, art symbols, beliefs and attitudes. In Avatime, women are the custodians and the authority of *kusakoko*.

Anthropologists including Leach, cited in Helman (2001) have pointed out that, virtually all societies have more than one culture within their borders and give example that most societies have some form of social stratification into social classes, castes or ranks. Each stratum is marked by its own distinctive cultural attributes, including use of language, manners, styles of dress, dietary and housing patterns as the rich and poor, powerful and powerless each will have their own inherited cultural perspective. To some extent, both men and women can have their own distinctive 'cultures' within the same society, and are expected to conform to different norms and different expectations. Many of these groups will undergo some degree of acculturation over time, whereby they incorporate some of the cultural attributes of the larger society, but others will not. So then, one may ask another question, what impact has culture on education. Culture has

been defined by Kluckhohn as cited in Helman (2001) as a design for living while Becker, (1986) sees it as shared understanding that people use to coordinate their activities because members of the society must share certain basic ideas about how the world works, what is important in life, how technology is to be used, and what their artefacts and their actions mean. Wuthnow also cited in Helman (2001) distinguished between the two and says, a structure refers to the practical or instrumental aspects of social relations whereas culture refers to the symbolic or aspects of social relations.

Gelles and Levine (1995) hinted that all cultures consist of six main elements, which are:

Beliefs (shared explanation of experience),

Values (criteria of moral judgment),

Norms and sanctions (specific guidelines for behaviour),

Symbols (representations of beliefs and values),

Language (a system of symbolic communication) and Technology

Almost all the authors spoke about certain elements in their definition of both education

and culture which are similar such as beliefs, norms, values, skills, knowledge, morals, symbols and other experiences as it also exist in the Avatime culture.

Beliefs:

Beliefs according to Sarpong (1974) are shared ideas about how the world operates. They may be summaries and interpretations of the past, explanations of the present, or predictions for the future, and they may be based on common sense, folk wisdom, religion, or science or on some combination of these. Some beliefs apply to intangible things (for example whether the human spirit lives on after death). All cultures distinguish between ideas for which people have reasonable proof (the idea that smoking increases the risk of cancer) and ideas that cannot be tested (the idea that there is intelligent life on other planet). Sarpong says belief in the spirits of the dead and in their influence over the living is found among all peoples, and in every conceivable religion and culture, belief in ancestors and their veneration therefore are not peculiar to any age, religion or society.

Norms and sanctions:

Gelles and Levine (1995) remind us that values are abstract ideals, norms are rules about what people should or should not do, say, or think in a given situation, for example while patriotism is a value, showing respect for the flag is a norm. To them, norms describe how people should behave and they provide guidelines for every activity. For example the major norm of the subject under study state clearly that every 'girl' will be regarded as Avatime 'woman' only after performing *kusak4k4* rites. The sanctions which follow the defilement or this norm is payment of fines, disregarding one's marriage or the performance of the rites when laying in state before burial.

Symbols:

Though Gelles and Levine also see symbols as things that can express or evoke meaning. Sarpong (1974) adds that, symbols have meaning but not all the things that have a meaning are symbols. The way in which Africans think about the world they live in, is often in symbolic, rather than, scientific terms. We cannot require all meaningful words to conform to rules of strict syllogism and inductive inference. Coherent thinking can be symbolic as well as scientific, and we cannot subject symbolic or poetic language to the same kind of analysis that we apply to scientific propositions. As in simple societies one has to be interested in symbols and symbolic thinking, the first thing that is to be determined is the meaning of 'symbol'. In many of its usages it is too wide for any useful conclusions to be derived from its study.

A symbol has a meaning, but not all things that have a meaning are symbols. We distinguish between two kinds of signs representing things that have meanings and stand for something other than themselves. First, there are signs which give information about happenings of the past, present or future. Their aim is to convey a specific message. Thus red light signifies that it is either dangerous or illegal to drive ahead. Animals make frequent use of signs but they are incapable of symbolic thinking. Signs are usually conventional, as are also languages. There is no inherent reason why the sound Mawu should be understood by the Ewe as referring to God, and not some other sound as in other languages.

According to Antubam (1963) Puruo (the circle) as a motif is often used to symbolize the presence and power of God, and sanctify in the spirit of the male aspect of society. It appears in the circular plan of most traditional temples of Ghanaian fetish gods, such as the Tano of Takyiman, Ntona of Elmina, and Lakpa of Labadi, Accra. The basic shape of the traditional pot called Ahina in Akan is a good example of its usage as a symbol of life-stream.

The broken circle or whirl as a symbol of fertility appears surprisingly on some male. The oval as a symbol of female beauty, it bears an element of leaning power. It appears in Ghanaian conceptions of the ideal shape of the female human figure. To be traditionally beautiful, a Ghanaian human figure must, in all its major shapes, fall into an oval of an egg. It is illustrated in the head shape of the Akan Ghanaian Akuaba (doll). It also appears in the shape of the traditional Ghanaian palm-wine pot called "akotokyiwa". The word *kusakɔkɔ* alone in Avatime symbolizes 'women empowerment' or *kededze* in Avatime language.

Values:

Gelles and Levine (1995) say whereas beliefs describe what is, values describe what ought to be. They see values as broad, abstract, shared standards of what is right, desirable, and worthy of respect. Although values are widely shared, they are seldom adhered to at all times by every member of a culture. Rather, values set the general tone for cultural and social life.

Values serve as the standards that guide individuals as well as groups and institutions. Ethical values define what is right and wrong. Basic ethical values include;

Fairness - rendering to each what is their due; being just and impartial.

Respect - acknowledging the dignity of others in our thoughts and actions.

Trustworthiness – being honest and reliable.

Caring - being empathetic and attentive to the needs of others. Ethical values often do not stand alone but are associated in clusters depending on contexts. The different clusters of values have slightly different emphases and the members of the cluster buttress one another. They are mutually supportive.

Also, virtues are aspects of our character; they are dispositions to act in accord with our fundamental values. A virtuous person is a person of good character whose actions are consistent with her or his values. In the Republic, Plato identified four central virtues; temperance, prudence, courage and justice. Other virtues include: altruism, beneficence, citizenship, compassion, dependability, fairness, fortitude, generosity, gratitude, honesty, honour and loyalty.

Most ethnic groups within a society tend to think that their culture is superior to the culture of other groups. This is especially true of the most powerful and dominant groups in our society.

Schofield (1972) describes education as a process of initiation. Learning must be provided to children and adults that leads to greater options for individual choice and for thinking beyond one's own learned cultural patterns of thought while still preserving respect for one's own cultural roots. Thus each student is given the freedom to retain or transcend his culture.

Many people see education as the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge. To them education is proper usage of knowledge acquired and it deals with passing down worthwhile or useful values within a society. The people of Avatime value knowledge, skills, norms and laws, customs which include the use of both visual and performing arts, beliefs, philosophies and many others. These values are also involved in the celebration of *kusakɔkɔ* initiation rites throughout in all the activities of the people of Amedzofe.

The concept of education can be interpreted differently by scholars and non scholars alike based on their interest and orientation. Looking at education from the socialist perspective, Durkheim (1992) thinks that it is the systematic socialization of the younger generation by which the latter learns religious and moral beliefs, feelings of nationality and collective opinions of all kinds.

According to Agyeman (1986) education is basically the process through which the individual learns to become a complete social member of his society and thereby performs social roles in the society. He went on to say that education is a social institution through which each society influences its individuals by passing on to them its culture which is the totality of the society's accumulated knowledge, art, laws, morals and ways of behaviour, the acquisition of which brings

the individual to the perfection of their nature. A community is everybody, adults and children, social or non-social, living in certain territory where all share a mode of life, but not all are conscious of their organization or purpose.

Ottaway (1962) also says society is a kind of community or a part of communities whose members have become socially conscious of their mode of life and are united by a common set of aims and values. The education is concerned with the development of personality. The teacher makes a deliberate and conscious attempt not only to teach his pupils a certain body of knowledge but also to change their behaviour and to change it in desired direction.

The aspects of the cultural groups, which affect teaching and learning, are classified as:

Miscellaneous factors which include income, occupation, education, language habits, types of residence, spending habits. Living habits are clothes and dresses, eating and diet, physical habits and means of keeping healthy, attitudes to marriage and sex, techniques of bringing up children, patterns of family life. Leisure pursuits are also reading, radio and T.V. programmes preferred, sports, entertainment favoured means of artistic expression, ways of spending holidays. Beliefs and value systems include moral attitudes and standards, religious beliefs, political view, social ambitions and aims in life. The behaviour of human is very flexible and will adapt itself to the cultural environment.

Musgrave (1979) defines culture as the patterns of behaviour that a society has to pass on to its new recruits as Tylor (1871) also sees it as complex whole which included knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. From all these definitions, culture can simply be defined as the way of life of a people of a place at a given time or period. Ghanaians have abstract philosophical and spiritual values which express our ideas of justice, vice and virtue, behaviour and interpersonal relation. Justice such as do not cheat, and do just what is right has positive impact on teaching and learning because it helps students to work hard and come out with good results though it may not be all of them. Communal life also enhances education because the sharing spirit is taught, which encourages group work. The other side is the mystical value. The meaning of something hidden somewhere may affect learning and teaching negatively. Herbalists try to hide the process of making medicine from the society or the young ones. Some societies value their language so much that everything is done to maintain its usage everywhere. The positive side of it is, sometimes the translation helps them to understand what is taught better. The culture of dressing also has an impact on education. Today, the modern way of dressing by our ladies which has different names such as *apuskeleke* and 'am aware' also characterized the fashion trends. The relation of the literature to *kusakoko* reveals the type of accumulated knowledge and skills handed down to the young one to preserve their culture. Certain subjects or jobs are identified with males and others with females. Women were taught to be potters and for textiles while the men, sculpture and other heavy duty work. Society values love or affection.

Finally, the impact of culture on education, the way we dress, justice, language barriers, in communal life, division of sex roles and others is not to be overemphasized. From all the discussions, so far, it is very obvious that, culture and education have a lot of things in common because as Tylor (1871) sees culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom. Agyeman (1986) also defines education as a social institution through which each society influences its accumulated knowledge, art, laws, morals and ways of behavior, and the acquisition of these elements bring the individuals to the perfection of their nature and so the study of *kusakoko* initiation rites focused on how the Avatimes value these elements and use them to successfully mould their women.

Rites of passage:

Gennep (1977) defines rite of passage as a ritual event that marks a person's progress from one status to another and says it can show anthropologists what social hierarchies, values and beliefs are important in specific cultures. Rites of passage are often ceremonies surrounding events such as other milestones within puberty, coming of age, marriage and death.

Gennep (1969) also explains that rites of passage, refers to the processes by which a creature moves from one state, level, or role to another. He adds that this process is usually psychologically, physically and spiritually intense and said many rites of passage, such as human birth, adulthood status, and death have become ritualistically celebrated and are experienced in various ways depending on the culture. Gennep also gives the 3-stage models for creating rites of passage as separation from the familiar, transition from old state to new state and reintegration into original social structure. Sarpong (1974) noted that, every culture is ultimately the handiwork of God. He thinks, it is God who placed people where they are and, allowed them to use their ingenuity and resourcefulness to subdue their environment, adapt it and have the ability to draw what advantages they want in order to arrive at their particular cultural situation or stage. He also

reiterated that, all over Africa and for that matter the whole world, significant rituals and ceremonies are, with varying degrees of intensity and seriousness, performed at the three major turning points of a man's life. According to him, in the so called primitive societies, these rites are collectively termed "rites de passage" or "Rites of Passage" from one stage to another. The crucial turning points are generally the time a person enters the world through birth, when he comes of age and enters the world of adulthood, and when through death, he departs from this world and enters the world of his forebears. What is adulthood?

Adulthood:

This study is focused on the transition from childhood to adulthood. According Sarpong (1974), the transition from childhood to adulthood may be considered both as a physiological phenomenon, in which case we speak of puberty, and as a sociological fact. Here he says that, the operative religious terms are "puberty rites" and "initiation ceremonies" while in the case of sociological adulthood, the distinction is also sometimes made between the access that one is given to sexual life, with its marital implications, and the social rights and duties one assumes as an adult in everyday life. In this regard, the difference between "nubility" from the word nubile and initiation are noteworthy. "Nubility" and initiation ceremonies differ from one society to another, and, within the same society may have different emphasis for boys and girls. In initiation ceremonies, the neophyte may have to undergo such ordeals as circumcision and bodily operations which result in cicatrices on the face, stomach and other parts of the body: he may be requested to kill a bull with one stroke of the hammer; he may be compelled to fight and cut off the head of a lion or a human being' he may be requested only to dance and feast. In many African societies, after going through his initiation ceremonies, one moves to the warrior stage and is expected to stand up and defend his people when the need arises and the need often does arise with devilish frequency, especially in pastoral societies, where people have to defend their cattle against raiders. In some societies marriage is considered to be a natural sequence to "nubility" or initiation rites, which therefore do not require much elaboration. In others, it is a distinct phenomenon requiring a thorough treatment in its own right.

Unlike the child, the adult is expected to behave in some well defined manner which should be in accordance with his age, status in life and condition of health. This mode of adult behaviours is particularly signified in the various initiation ceremonies of the various African societies. Sarpong (1974) explains that, the ceremonies are not only meant to signify something real and of importance but they are also to effect what they stand for, so that when a girl initiated is given an egg to swallow shows that, her future labours may turn out to be easy, the girl and the community are telling the spirits what they want from them, the expressive or suggestive aspect of the rite. They also believe that eggs are laid and bathed with ease meant to perform is to usher the child into adulthood. After the performance of the initiation ceremonies, one has the right, and at times to perform certain acts that were formerly out of bounds to one. In some societies after a girl has been initiated she is entitled to be referred to by all who have not been initiated as 'mother'. From the above statements, one will comfortably defined initiation as a rite of passage ceremony marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society. It could also be a formal admission to adulthood in a community or one of its formal components. In an extended sense it can also signify a transformation in which the initiate is 'reborn' into a new role. A spiritual initiation rite normally implies a shepherding process where those who are at a higher level guide the initiate through a process of greater exposure of knowledge. This may include the revelation of secrets, hence the term secret society for such organizations, usually reserved for those at the higher level of understanding. Turner (1982) indicates that, life may be interpreted as a series of transitions from one status or condition to another. In most instances, the transition is a step forward or upward. Every person moves from fixed placental placement within the mother's womb, to his death and final containment to his grave as a dead organism punctuated by a number of critical moment of transition which all societies ritualized and publicly marked with suitable observances to impress the significance of the individual and the group on living members of the community.

When one is born, the day, the month and the year of his life time are all divided up or reckoned accordingly to their specific events which make life meaningful. Possibly the most noteworthy of transitions and one that is frequently celebrated with art works by the people of Avatime is the *kusakoko* initiation rites.

Initiation rites:

Eliade (1998) thinks initiation is an event which may help teens prepare themselves to be good husbands and wives. Where modernization is occurring, initiation is not taken so seriously as before, although there are still certain areas which still perform initiations. Initiation is a rite of passage ceremony marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society. It could also be a formal admission to adulthood in a community or one of its formal components. In an extended sense it

can also signify a transformation in which the initiate is 'reborn' into a new role. A person taking the initiation ceremony in traditional rites, such as those depicted in these pictures, is called an *initiate*. Eliade gave reasons for and functions of initiation as follows:

This real valuation of ritual death finally led to conquest of the fear of real death.

4. TYPES OF INITIATION

Eliade (1998) differentiates between types of initiations in two ways:

He says puberty rites is a collective ritual whose function is to effect the transition from childhood or adolescence to adulthood. These types of initiations represent above all the revelation of the sacred who enter into a Secret Society Mystical Vocation, the vocation of a medicine man or a shaman. The initiation is limited to the few who are destined to participate in a more intense religious experience than is accessible to the rest of the community and thinks these can be broken into two types:

Puberty rites, by virtue of which adolescents gain access to the sacred, to knowledge, and to sexuality by which, in short, they become human beings. A person taking the initiation ceremony in traditional rites, such as those depicted in these pictures, is called an *initiate*.

Sex and Marriage connected in the initiation:

However, by far the most important effect of initiation ceremonies is that, they introduce one into sex and marriage life as indicated by Eliade (1998). He says in some Ghanaian societies, girls, and to a lesser extent, boys, who have not been initiated are not supposed to know anything by experience about sex. Boys and girls who married for the first time were said to have been taught how to perform the sex act. A girl who indulged in sexual adventure prior to her initiation was severely punished, sometimes with death, particularly if she had not reached physiological puberty. If, on the other hand, it was found out that she was biologically mature but had still to be socially declared so through the performance of the rites, then she was ritually cleansed and purified, and then punished with a fine or something less stringent than would have been meted out to her if she had been below the age of physiological puberty.

According to Eliade girl who conceived before being initiated was dealt with in like manner. All this was demanded by custom because it was implicitly thought that by her misbehaviour the girl had usurped a position which she was not entitled. Sex was for the adult. If then she wanted to explore the possibilities of sex, then she had first to inform the community. It is because of the close association between sex and marriage on one hand and the initiation ceremonies on the other that the latter is sometimes referred to as nubility rites.

Eliade states that initiation ceremonies may be performed for groups of persons when it is a group affair; the initiates are usually of similar ages, and those initiated during one set of ceremonies belong to what is termed the same age-set. In some societies there are cycles within which people are initiated, the result being that one group of initiates may contain individuals with varying ages, but the age difference is usually not wider than five years between the youngest and the oldest neophyte. Age mates may enjoy mutual rights and have common duties. For example, among some people age mates may be entitled to exchange wives, eat one another's food without permission or even knowledge, use one another's personal effects, and so forth. Initiation ceremonies, as was remarked earlier, are mostly marked by tests of endurance. Novices may be put to diverse tests by being operated in broad day light with crude instruments.

Eliade adds that there are usually men and women who are reputed to have the skill and the potency to perform these operations. They make as many as six deep cuts across the novice's forehead from one ear to the other. They may make cicatrices on the stomach, the face, the back or buttocks. Some of these marks are renewable and renewed from time to time. At times the novices tooth or teeth are forcibly extracted. The usual forms of operations, however, are circumcision (for boys) and cutting clitoris (for girls). It is essential that while these operations are being performed the neophyte show no sign of pain. One who screams while he or she is being operated upon may be hard put to it to find a wife or husband. Such a person has shown by his shameful reaction to the operation that he is still a child, not a man or woman to marry. For the reason for these 'cruel' exercises is to find out whether indeed the individual is prepared to assume all the responsibilities of adult which are not child's play.

Every year in the spring, Krobo girls become women. In Eastern Ghana, young girls from the Krobo ethnic group undergo a series of rituals through which they leave childhood behind. The rituals, locally called dipo, were originally reserved for teenage girls and indicated they were ready to take a husband. In recent years, human rights groups and parents alike have objected to the requirement for dipo initiates to go bare-breasted for part of the rituals (Plate 2.11). In *kusakoko*, some practices such as making the girls naked before clothing them is symbolic of being “ripe” for marriage may also affect their human rights.

5. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was used to explore and understand beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions of the people of Avatime in the Volta Region. Qualitative research techniques such as focus groups and in-depth interviews were also used to find out more about the *kusakoko* initiation from the chiefs, the various sub-chiefs some elders, opinion leaders, the pastors, some church elders and some initiates.

The main research method that was used to do the study on *kusakoko* initiation rites was ethnography. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) assert that, the qualitative researcher may make observations either as a relative outsider or especially in the case of ethnography, as a participant observer. Leedy and Ormrod indicate that, ethnography differs from a case study in the sense that, case study studies a person, programme, or event while ethnography studies an entire group that shares a common culture (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Creswell (2003) also defines ethnographies as a situation in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data. The focus is on everyday behaviours to identify norms, beliefs, social structures, and other factors

In Avatime, the researcher tried to understand the changes in the groups’ culture over time. As a result, findings made were limited to generalization on the study after visiting all the selected communities. In the ethnography methodology, the researcher was immersed in the daily lives of the participants in order to observe their behaviour then interpreted the culture or social group and systems (Creswell, 2003).

In anthropology and sociology, it is a common practice to distinguish between primary and secondary data. Generally speaking, primary data are unpublished and are gathered by the researcher from the people or organization directly. The distinguishing feature of ethnography, however, is that the researcher spends a significant amount of time in the field. The fieldwork notes and the experience of living there become an important addition to any other data gathering techniques that may be used. More often, qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources. Instead, their sampling is purposive. They select those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation (Leedy and Ormrod 2005). Owing to the fact that *kusakoko* is common to all the people of Avatime,

Purposive sample was used to access information relevant to the topic in Amedzofe, Biakpa and Vane. The sample for the research was based on the adults aged between 18 and 70 years. The researcher sampled people for the purpose of data collection including chiefs, elders in the traditional area, community or opinion leaders in the area, various musical groups, church leaders, beneficiaries of the programme also called the initiates, teachers and some University students who are also natives of the traditional area. One hundred and ninety (190) respondents were interviewed.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), there are common tools of research that majority of researchers, regardless of the field of enquiry, use. These are the library and its resources, the computer and its software, techniques of measurement statistics, the human mind and language. They include that in any single study qualitative researchers generally use multiple forms of data obtained through observations, interviews, objects, written documents, audiovisual materials, electronic document (e.g., e-mail, websites), and anything else that can help them answer their research questions. Besides, the researchers should record any potentially useful data thoroughly, accurately, and systematically using field notes, audiotapes, sketches, photographs or any suitable means (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Some of these data collecting instruments were used to gather data for this study.

The instrumentation used for the collection of data included participant observation and interviews (Appendix A). The instruments mentioned above helped trace the historical facts of the customary rite. They helped to assess the philosophical and symbolic meanings behind *kusakoko* initiation and also identified the various artefacts and how the participants value them artistically and the educational implication of the entire social activity.

Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) define observation as the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of people. The researchers relied on the cultivation of personal relationships with local informants as a way of learning about their culture, involving both observing and participating in the social life of a people of the various communities in Avatime. By living with them, the researcher was able to formulate first-hand accounts of their lives and gain novel insights. This same method of study was successful, sharing a strong sense of identity, where only by taking the observer truly got access to the lives of those being studied.

Participant observation is usually undertaken over an extended period of time, ranging from several months to many years. An extended research time period means that the researcher will be able to obtain more detailed and accurate information about the people he/she is studying. Observable details (like daily time allotment) and more hidden details (like taboo behaviour) are more easily observed and understandable over a longer period of time. A strength of observation and interaction over long periods of time is that researchers can discover discrepancies between what participants say and often believe should happen (the formal system) and what actually does happen, or between different aspects of the formal system; in contrast, a one-time survey of people's answers to a set of questions might be quite consistent, but is less likely to show.

The participant observation gave a more detailed and accurate information about the people of Avatime and also because a key advantage of observation research is that often the respondents are unaware that they are being observed, it allows their behaviour to be observed naturally.

The interview method of research, typically, involves a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asks an individual a series of questions. Personal interviews were used to collect in-depth and comprehensive information on the history and philosophy behind this rich cultural practice, also seek their understanding and appreciation of the artefacts used and the educational implications. The participants were asked to respond to general questions to also explore their responses to identify and define the people's perception, opinions and feelings about the topic.

Corroboration was used to increase the understanding of the probability that the findings will be seen as credible or worthy of consideration by others (Stainback and Stainback, 1988). Related to validation of data, researcher-participant corroboration was employed, which has also been referred to as cross-examination. There was a follow up where some respondents were cross-examined again to ascertain the facts about *kusakɔkɔ*.

In the case of *kusakɔkɔ*, the informants were interviewed multiple times, using information from previous informants for clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. This process was intended to reveal common cultural understandings that were related to the phenomena under study. These understandings were interpreted to be more significant than objective data and this also validates the data.

The researcher focused on three communities in the Avatime traditional area namely: Amedzofe, Biakpa and Vane and selected informants who were known to have an overview on the *kusakɔkɔ* activities. Prominent among them were the 'ritual mothers' who were well prepared to be interviewed. It should be noted that ethnography may be approached from the point of view of art and cultural preservation, and as a descriptive rather than analytic endeavour. The comments here, however, focus on social science analytic aspects. In this focus, ethnography is a branch of cultural anthropology.

The researchers undertook participant observation and strived to avoid theoretical preconceptions instead, to induce theory from the perspectives of the members of the culture of the people of Avatime and from observation. He lived among the people of the three communities during the festive occasions such as Christmas, Easter and some special days designed for those who were ready to be initiated. These days were scheduled between July and August which were months when many people are on holidays. They chose these festive periods also because of the modern economic activities where most people migrate to the cities to work may be on break. The researchers also strived to understand the cultural connotations associated with symbols.

Interviews were conducted on the age groups between 18 and 70. These groups were specifically the youth and adults. Categorizing them in (Table 1) 10 % were within the age group of (60 and above) - 15% were aged (50-59) -18% for the age group of (40-49) - 20% were with the age group of (30-39) - 50% for (20-29) - 07% were from (19 and below) they include the chiefs and elders, ritual mothers, church elders, the females who benefited from the puberty rites and other youth groups.

In all 83% of respondents who were interviewed were females as compared with their male counterparts (17%). This is so because the initiation is for females. In all 190 respondents were interviewed. The large population of female respondents came as a result of the subject for the study being a predominant female ceremony. The data were to find out the educational values of this important cultural practice *kusakoko*. The sources of the data were obtained right from interviewing the sampled population and also observing the activities at Amedzofe, Biakpa and Vane in the Volta Region. The researcher travelled to the location of the data and collected information and also participated in the activities.

6. RESULTS

In accordance with the various subjects reviewed, *kusakoko* initiation rites were characterized with numerous educational values. The successful beneficiary of the ceremony was expected to assume certain responsibilities just as Sarpong (1974) states that the adult is expected to behave in some well-defined manner in relation with their age, status in life and condition of health. In line with Agyeman's (1986) definition of education, it is clear that, basically the individual learns to become a complete social member of his society and thereby performs social roles in the society. He states further that, education is a social institution through which each society influences its accumulated knowledge, arts, laws, morals and ways of behaviour, the acquisition of which brings the individuals to the perfection of their nature. The study reveals that, the people of Avatime value education and therefore put in place activities to transmit their accumulated knowledge. By this definition, it implies that the people of Avatime are not far away from the general cultural principles of handing down accumulated information, skills, laws, ethics and character to make the "girl" faultless, just and ideal "woman".

The philosophy of Education in Avatime:

The philosophy of Education in Avatime from the study is based on the belief that if one educates a woman he or she educates a whole family and for that matter the whole society. The Avatimes believed that it is a woman who makes a home (*ɔdze abite kepe*) meaning all their cultural heritage handed down to women will be transmitted to everybody, hence the performance on *kusakoko* for girls.

Values are described as broad, abstract, shared standards of what is right, desirable and worthy of respect. Although values are shared they are seldom adhered to at all times by every member of the traditional area. Rather, values set a general tone for their cultural and social life. Beliefs describe what is, while value describes what ought to be.

The educational values uncovered in this study are discussed under the following sub topics:

Family loyalty, (*kedone or kededze*), Loyalty and Honesty (*kunɔavakaka*), Virtue, (*kunɔgbã*), Propriety and patience (*litɔplese*), Morals (*eboegbã*), Gratitude (*dasedodo*), Respect (*kunɔbuo*), Religious Values (*Kusɔliɔ*), Motherhood (*obinee*), Protection (*isublaba*), Manners (*Ligbazeze gbã*), Beauty (*kupedi*), Cleanliness, (*kudradra*), Punctuality or Time values (*ɔnyɔavakugaga*), Diligence, (*Kubuete*), Endurance (*idzidodo*), Treasures (*oyonete*)

Family royalty (*kedone or kededze*):

Family royalty is at the heart of the Avatime system of value. The girls are raised to honour and obey their parents to center their lives on making their elders happy. *Kulala* which literally means informing the Chief and elders, the clan chiefs, the family head and every household for *kusakoko* celebration to create the awareness that the girl is of age to be initiated into womanhood and ready for marriage is an activity to teach the initiate how to be loyal. The initial announcement of the rite is made a month prior to the celebration, and then the mother of the initiate selects a 'ritual mother' for her daughter who prepares the young girl for her future role as a wife and mother. The study revealed that, now, some initiates had already become mothers before the ceremony but they go through the rituals to satisfy the requirement. There is a demonstration of respect for elders as age is equated with wisdom.

Loyalty and Honesty (*kunɔavakaka*):

Loyalty is characterized by faithfulness, devotion, allegiance, trust worthiness, constancy, reliability, fidelity, dependability. It is the support that one always gives to someone or something because of his or her feelings of duty and love toward it. Fidelity is the attitude or behaviour of some who are willing to have sex only with their husband, wife or partner. These things were taught in the room during confinement and on the day she sat with all the elders present, the ritual mothers ask questions and as they answer them, they receive cheers from the public or those gathered around. Viewers make comments in their native language such as *ebe* or *ape*, meaning she is well cooked, she is good respectively. They expect, sincerity, truthfulness, integrity, frankness, candor, openness as honesty is to be fair with complete truth.

Virtue (*kunɔgbã*):

Virtues are aspects of our character that are dispositions to act in accord with our fundamental values. A virtuous person is a person of good character whose actions are consistent with her or his values. A successful *kusakɔkɔ* graduate is supposed to be an asset, good quality, good feature, desirable quality, good value, good worth, high merit, high calibre. A good quality or habit is that which a person has, especially a moral one such as honesty or loyalty. Asset is a major benefit while adaptability is a supreme virtue meaning flexibility, malleability and compliance. It is the change of ideas with new situations. Normally, individuals who adjust their principles to the circumstances and who are quick to compromise are admired.

Propriety and patience (*litɔplese*):

Propriety means politeness, decorum, modesty, good manners, respectability, decency, correctness and aptness. Propriety is the behaviour that follows accepted social or moral standards. Modesty is a feeling of being shy or embarrassed about other people seeing her body. The climax, the solemn and the most ritual moment in *kusakɔkɔ* rites, was when the girl stood naked at the entrance to the room. This moment of the ceremony was very crucial and very symbolic because the cloth that the girl wore while she was spinning was removed and the girl stood naked facing the entrance to a room of the house. She was ashamed of being naked, so she covered her pubic area with her left hand and her eyes with her right hand. It is considered one of the most important activities of the rituals and only a girl who had not been pregnant or conceived before this time could stand this test.

The philosophy here is the basis for *kusakɔkɔ* rites because the Avatimes believe that once the girl feels shy of her nakedness, it is a sign of maturity hence her readiness for womanhood rites. Propriety, the ability to maintain an even temper and be polite, no matter what circumstances, is highly prized. Raising one's voice for any reason at all is considered vulgar. Open display of affection is insult to the loved one as well as to anyone who might see them and as is the extensive use of gestures in talking. Aptness is a person who is good at learning or tendency to do something.

Morals (*eboegbã*):

Morals are ethical, good, right, honest, decent, proper, honourable and just. Ethics involves the principle use for deciding what is right while honourable is the moral good and deserving respect. Early in the morning on Wednesday the initiate is confined in a room having instructions as to how to go about the rituals and also receive some lessons on communal living and morals. Avatime morality, most times are embedded in religious values. The moral beliefs and principles of the Avatime people are derived from religion. Religion provides the necessary justification for moral values and beliefs, and that moral concepts, such as good, bad, right and wrong, are defined in religious prescriptions or commands. For example the statement, "He has no moral" in Avatime language is *ligba zeze ma yawla* (which means "He has no character").

In general, the Avatime satisfactorily fulfills the duty of imparting moral knowledge to their members through moral education of various forms, including, telling morally-freighted proverbs and folktales to *kusakɔkɔ* initiates. Performing art forms such as singing, drumming or dancing are normally used to break monotony and boredom. Morals are those that have to do with the conduct of persons, usually leading to praise or blame

Gratitude (*dasedodo*):

There were activities in the celebration which allow the people to give thanks or a sign of thankfulness, appreciation and gratefulness. Gratitude is feeling of being grateful to some people because they have given something or done something. These values were expressed on the last day of the celebration where in another procession the initiates, the family members, elders and all friends go through all the streets amidst singing and dancing to thank everybody for their support. As indicated in the discussion of the ceremony, there was symbolism of raising the right hand up so that from which angle one watches them from, the hands communicate "thank you for yesterday" in their native language *mlewaluhue loo!!!!*

Respect (*kunɔbuo*):

The people value respect *kunɔbuo* in Ewe *Amebubu* so for the fact that the girl has accepted to go through the ritual shows great respect for both her parents and the elders. The initiates were also taught how to bend down when greeting as a sign or symbol of respect. One cannot agree with Sarpong (1974) more when he said, old age is sacred as the old person is thought to be in closer proximity to the ancestors, hence it is in relation to the sacred that a respectful attitude should be shown towards authority, old age, the mysterious and the spirituals. Appreciation, high opinion, deference, esteem, reverence and reveres are all the expected values with regards to respect in the traditional area. Going through the rituals

was apparently unpleasant and painful, and was done to remind the girl to respect her husband and not to be stubborn and tough; *tɔ abubɔ* meaning “so she will soften.”

Religious Values (*Kusɔliɔ*) The Avatimes value Godlines therefore expect members to be spiritual, sacred, holy, devout, pious, and dutiful. Early in the morning of *kusakɔkɔ* day about 5.00 am as indicated in the discussion of the ceremony, the initiates gather in the church premises for prayers towards the day’s activities. They are accompanied by their helpers called *dasefo* family members and friends. It was also observed that the pastors take the opportunities to bless the ritual cloths and the beads used for the ceremony. Here again Sarpong (1974) points out that the belief in a Supreme Being is basic to the Ghanaian’s traditional way of life. Beyond the church activities, libations were also performed as a form of prayer through the ancestors to the gods. Avatimes believe in the trinity, that is, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and it is demonstrated in all aspects of the ceremony as the initiates are blessed by the Pastors of various Churches indicated in Plate 1. Also the traditionalists believe in God of heaven (*aya*), God of the earth (*kesake*) and ancestors (*batretrewa*). For example three balls of porridge (*bimukɔ*) and stew were put into a dish and sent to the priest of the rice pantheon and also gave some to the ancestors as shown in Plate 2. Also in the discussion of the *kusakɔkɔ* ceremony, the initiate was held to sit on the ritual stool three times. Thirdly, during the clothing of the naked initiate, the *Kekusidzeba* covered her three times. The church activities are followed by a small procession leading the initiate to their various ritual homes for confinement.

Motherhood (*obinee*):

Motherhood is the state of being a mother and is likened to parenthood, maternity and motherliness. Some respondents indicated that, cooking starts at dawn of *kusakɔkɔ* with the preparation of the local rice popularly called *lefeffe* and it is roasted rice flour mixed with water cooked with palm oil and meat and later cooked rice porridge. Some *kekusidzebawa* made a little porridge with stew made from green leaves *sigase* and palm oil. No pepper, or other vegetables could be put into the stew and only ‘bush meat’ should be put with it (that is meat brought from hunting expedition). The sending of the special meal to the priest was to inform him officially of the ceremony, and would help the girl to conceive or take seed when married.

The mother of the initiate is supposed to get all the *kusakɔkɔ* items ready for the celebration before it is announced. The items include the prescribed local clothes called *bewue* and *kotokoto*, the new pot, beads, cooking utensils, specially made local broom called *lidzule* among others (Plate 3). These items are symbolic of a mother starting a home. The girl sat facing her mother while her mother hands over the items after being taught the qualities of a good mother. In Avatime a good mother is compassionate and gentle but firm and instills discipline. She is approachable and willing to listen. She is open hearted, has a healthy perspective about issues, leave home but love to come back often. One vice a mother must avoid in Avatime is never using derogatory comments on her children but praise his/her goodness and help to groom the weak sides with words of encouragement. A good mother is always there for her children which creates a family bond. Among the parents the mother has a much larger role to play in a child’s life because she gave that child the milk of life through the chord and her breast. Flexibility, love, nurturing, the ability to soothe, are among the characteristics of what makes a good mother.

Protection (*isublaba*):

An auntie of the girl who is also a ‘father’s sister’ escorted the girl whose head was covered by a cloth (Plate 4) to the clan elder’s house before being brought back to the room. Covering the head also symbolizes her protection from catching a glimpse at mountain tops which they believed would have brought some misfortune on her. The prepared flour is then brought out by her ‘auntie’ and she sprinkles some on the back of the hearth or grate, on the sides and into the pot, three times before most of the flour was put into the boiling water inside the pot to make the porridge. The sprinkling of the rice flour symbolizes the recognition of the presence of the ancestors for protection.

Manners (*Ligbazeze gbã*):

When the people of Avatime value manners, they expect the members to be etiquette, have modus operandi, good manners, good performance, satisfactory conduct and comportment. Manners are traditional accepted ways of being, that show a polite respect for other people which is the custom or accepted social behaviour of the people. During *Amutoto* which also means pounding and preparation of *amu* or local rice which is the important ‘ritual meal’ for the *kusakɔkɔ* rites. Pounding *amu* is often done on a Thursday within the month prior to the main ceremony. This is done early in the morning on Thursday involving both young and old women some of whom have already gone through the *kusakɔkɔ*

ceremony. It is done amidst merry making, sharing of jokes, and display of old skills, storytelling and introductions of family members. There is a special way of pounding, blowing and roasting before milling the local rice.

Thursday is chosen for this activity because it is a special day which the communities set aside as a taboo for going to farm or doing any ground work as indicated in the discussion of the ceremony. The initiate at this point in time, exposed to many provocations, loose talk, and all kinds of mannerisms which becomes a test for politeness, good manners a satisfactory conduct that can measure up the standards accepted in the society. They are taught, manners of sitting, speaking in public, eating and marriage as Antubam (1963) enumerates, when he spoke about beauty in the manner of doing things.

Beauty (*kupedi*):

Beauty is highly valued in this traditional area due to the nature of the celebration of these rites that are related with *kusakoko* meaning cloth giving and associated with terms such as loveliness, attractiveness, good looking, prettiness, exquisiteness, gorgeousness, splendour and magnificence. The word beautiful is something extreme, which the Avatimes call *kupedi* or in Ewe *enyakpo*. It is attractive, pleasant to look, done or made very well, good looking, with a lot of skills, pretty, and generous. The initiate is dressed in white blouse and kente or any locally made cloth with beads around the neck to assume the status of an adult or woman as shown in (Plate 4 & 5). However, Antubam (1963) sees beauty differently when he says, ideas of beauty reveal themselves in the manner and rules of doing things. They also appear in people's preferences for certain methods which to others may be strange and peculiar.

Cleanliness (*kudradra*):

Cleanliness is another important value the people hold very strongly. They value hygiene, sanitation, purity and spotlessness. Some ritual mothers interviewed said, throughout the period of spinning, the girl was expected to bath only in cold water from the pot with special local sponge called *osapolo*. Kekpere, one of the experienced ritual mothers in Amedzofe, when contacted, gave her account of isolation and spinning during confinement as she says the girl and her friends went to one of the streams in the various communities, at the place where water for ritual purposes was usually drawn.

Punctuality (*onyɔavakugaga*):

Punctuality is the value of promptness, time keeping, reliability, regularity therefore punctuality simply means arriving or something happening at the time agreed on. Time - the quality that you measure using a clock or an occasion, a period, availability of something occasion, instance, point in time, moment in time, moment, point, instant or era.

Avatimes value punctuality of mastery, punctuality of competence, punctuality of integrity, punctuality of value for other people, punctuality of value for oneself. Punctuality of mastery is being on time consistently showing everyone around that one is the master of his life. It demonstrates foresight the ability to predict possible hang-ups and adaptability. It shows the ability to change one's plans to accommodate those hang-ups.

Punctuality of competence is exhibited when someone shows; he or she is the master of her time or someone who will be taken seriously. It is significant of handling whatever is thrown at the person. Punctuality of integrity also shows trust, thus making an appointment, which symbolic of commitment. The only way one builds up other people's trust in them is by consistently meeting his commitments. The person who is always on time is someone others can trust to be as good as his word. Punctuality of value for people shows clearly and truly, that when one values time it is by extension, that he values other people. Punctuality of value for oneself is expressed when being on time shows he values his time and oneself. There *kusakoko* initiates therefore schooled by the ritual mothers whiles they were confined.

Diligence (*Kubuete*):

The celebration transmits the values of assiduousness, meticulousness, thoroughness, carefulness, attentiveness and industry. Avatimes want the attitude or behaviour of initiates to show hard work and being very careful in anything they do. The account in Biakpa noted that the number of spindles prepared during the confinement by the initiate represented a symbol of the girl's diligence, assiduousness, meticulousness, conscientiousness, attentiveness, carefulness. The meaning of the symbol is that, it is the attitude of the girl who works very hard and very careful. The initiate is taught how to prepare a special food called *akple* in a clay pot which requires great care. Most of the initiates do fail this particular test because clay is not as strong as the metal pot, rather a little fragile. A successful usage of the pot without any breakages shows how careful or diligent the initiate would be in a marital home.

Endurance (*idzidodo*):

Endurance is associated with staying power, tolerance, lack of complaint, persistence, fortitude, serenity. The study reveals that the people cherish endurance which is the ability to continue doing things physically difficult or continue tasks without any unnecessary complaints. This task is normally measured from the first day of *kusakoko* to the end of all the activities. Formerly it was the mother of the initiates that looks for various items to be used during the performance of the ritual but now, in most cases, it is the initiate who buys her own items.

Treasures (*oyonete*)

The people of Avatime associate treasures with, resources, riches, reserves, materials, raw materials, assets or possession. They also see treasures as the collection of valuable things especially jewels or gold and silver, a piece of art or historical objects, treasure hunt or treasure trove. Owing to their belief in treasures, *kusakoko* celebration performs some rituals to assure the initiates of the success story in these forms of treasures for example, during parts of the rituals, three pieces of palm fruits, some herbs, and coins were mixed with water and poured as libation. (plate 6a, 6b & 7). Philosophically, the coins represent riches, palm fruits symbolize long life, peace, growth, protection and anointing for spiritual and material procession. Three pieces of palm fruits also represent their belief in the Trinity of God while the herb signifies good health and fertility.

7. SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

Data collected through observation and interviews that were assembled and analyzed can be interpreted as the following principal major findings of the study:

- *Kusakoko* initiation rites was first called *Ablabe* rites. The celebration of *Ablabe* which first started from Amedzofe one of the Avatime towns literally means “pineapple”
- *Kusakoko* means ‘giving of cloth’ to females in Avatime. Avatime recognizes the worth and contributions of women to society therefore mark the transition of a female from girlhood to womanhood. The woman is an important figure in the development of Avatime community. Significantly, such recognition is not given to males.
- *Kusakoko* rites is a way by which the people of Avatime transmit and preserve their cultural heritage. Both traditional religion and Christianity play a very important role in the celebration of *kusakoko* by way of educating the girls through rituals to prepare them to become useful members of the society.
- *Kusakoko* rites are associated with marriage, so the ceremonies are most times performed before marriage rituals. The rituals of *kusakoko* may be performed alongside marriage rituals if not performed before marriage.
- Sanctions are imposed on the girls who did not go through the rituals to check the deviant behaviour of members. If a woman dies without performing the rituals, the rituals are performed when lying in state before burial.
- The educational values through the uses of art forms in *kusakoko* provide symbols of identity, means of communication and serve as objects of visual knowledge. The art forms also provide education of the people intellectually, socially, psychologically, spiritually, physically and artistically.
- The educational values in *kusakoko* provide sources for teaching Aesthetics, Appreciation, Criticism, Art history, Hands-on-skills in Visual Arts for Art Education.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The findings and observations provide information and answers for the research questions. Avatimes mark the passage of girls into womanhood by performing a series of rituals known as *kusakoko*. The most noteworthy of the transitions frequently celebrated in the area is the move from childhood to adulthood. This is the time the youth, especially the females, are prepared for adult activities and responsibilities, hence the initiation rites is called *kusakoko* 'literally meaning 'giving of cloth'. *Kusa* means cloth while *koko* means giving. *kusakoko* initiation has transformed girls from the relatively ignorant and irresponsible state of childhood to the state of knowledgeable responsible adulthood ready for marriage in Avatime.

There are a lot of artistic and educational values locked up in the celebration of the *kusakoko* rites which were not documented but successfully, they have now been identified discussed and revealed that their celebration was artistic

because things were done skilfully, tasteful and aesthetically satisfying. The educational values were also discussed and analysed under subtopics such as family royalty, loyalty and honesty, virtue, propriety and patience, beauty, morals, gratitude, respect, religious values, motherhood, manners, cleanliness, treasures, punctuality or time values and diligence.

The essential aspect of this study is the fact that the young girls during their initiation rites were taught morals, ethics, skills, values, or norms. The development of skills or character through knowledge received, thus a body of artistic and educational information that exist in Avatime which were unearthed during the study are now brought to the fore of Art Education as a resource material for reference purposes.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Observation has shown that religion is believed to shape the peoples' perception and reaction to situation about *kusakɔkɔ* puberty rites and that some aspects of the rites are sacrilegious to the Christian faith. There should be collaboration between the Pastors and the ritualists to educate members about the educational benefits of *kusakɔkɔ* as individuals as well as the society.
- Education and occupation are factors which are negatively affecting the smooth process of *kusakɔkɔ* rites thereby making it less attractive currently. It is therefore recommended that more group ritual activities be encouraged to be done only once a year for school going girls and workers to participate during school holidays and a weekend respectively.
- Despite the fact that the initiation rites are meant to educate the young girls to become good home makers and virtuous women for marriage, the successful graduates see the process as coming of age or licence to practice sex leading to teenage pregnancy in the area. The researcher therefore recommends strict rules or control measures to prevent this menace or provide education about the cultural meaning for ritual mothers to be transmitted to the initiates.
- Though the rites are aimed at promoting education and developing or empowering the girl child, most young girls in Avatime traditional area see the rituals as a gateway to marry early, hence drop out of school. They prefer to stop schooling or apprenticeship training leading to unemployment and lack of education. Chiefs and elders of Avatime should use incentives such as rewards or awards as forms of motivation during the celebration of *kusakɔkɔ* to encourage these young ones to attend school and also curb the menace.
- The people also value norms and sanctions, so they impose sanctions on those who refuse to go through the rituals. The rites are still performed on the corpses of those who did not perform the rites in their life time as punishment. The researcher believes that members should be allowed to exercise their freedom of rights and decide on what they also believe in these modern times.
- The initiation does not directly relate to HIV transmission just because the rites do not involve sexual interaction, may be, as other practices, but its attraction to people from all walks of life suggest some amount of sexual activities because observation shows that, most people do not know details about HIV, let alone preparing to protect themselves. It is recommended that Ghana AIDS Commission, PPAG, and NGOs take advantage of the celebration to educate people in the area. The ritual mothers should also be trained with the requisite information necessary for the education of the initiates on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted disease.
- It is was observed that some people in Ghana and other parts of the world have no knowledge about *kusakɔkɔ* and rather, refer to only Dipo rites anytime puberty rites or initiation rites are mentioned .It is therefore highly recommended for the educational values of art in this document to be incorporated in the General Knowledge of Art syllabus of the Senior High School to put it in the limelight of the whole world.
- Finally the researchers recommend the continuation of *kusakɔkɔ* because it provides education for the people intellectually, socially, psychologically, spiritually, physically.

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APPENDIX - A

Tables and Plates:

Table 1: Age of Respondents

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE (%) INTERVIEWED
60 and Above	10
50 – 59	15
40 – 49	18
30 – 39	20
20 – 29	50
19 and Below	7
TOTAL	100



Plate 1a: Ancestral food in the earthenware bowl



Plate 1b: Spreading ancestral food



Plate 1: Blessing of ritual cloth by a Pastor in Amedzofe



Plate 2: Sending items to the initiate's home in Amedzofe



Plate 3: Covering of initiate's hair in Biakpa



Plate 4: Initiate gorgeously dressed in white blouse and lace



Plate 5: Initiates gorgeously dressed in different attire



Plates 6a & 6b: Coins, palm fruits and herbs used in performing libation



Plate 7: Pattern created after performing libation